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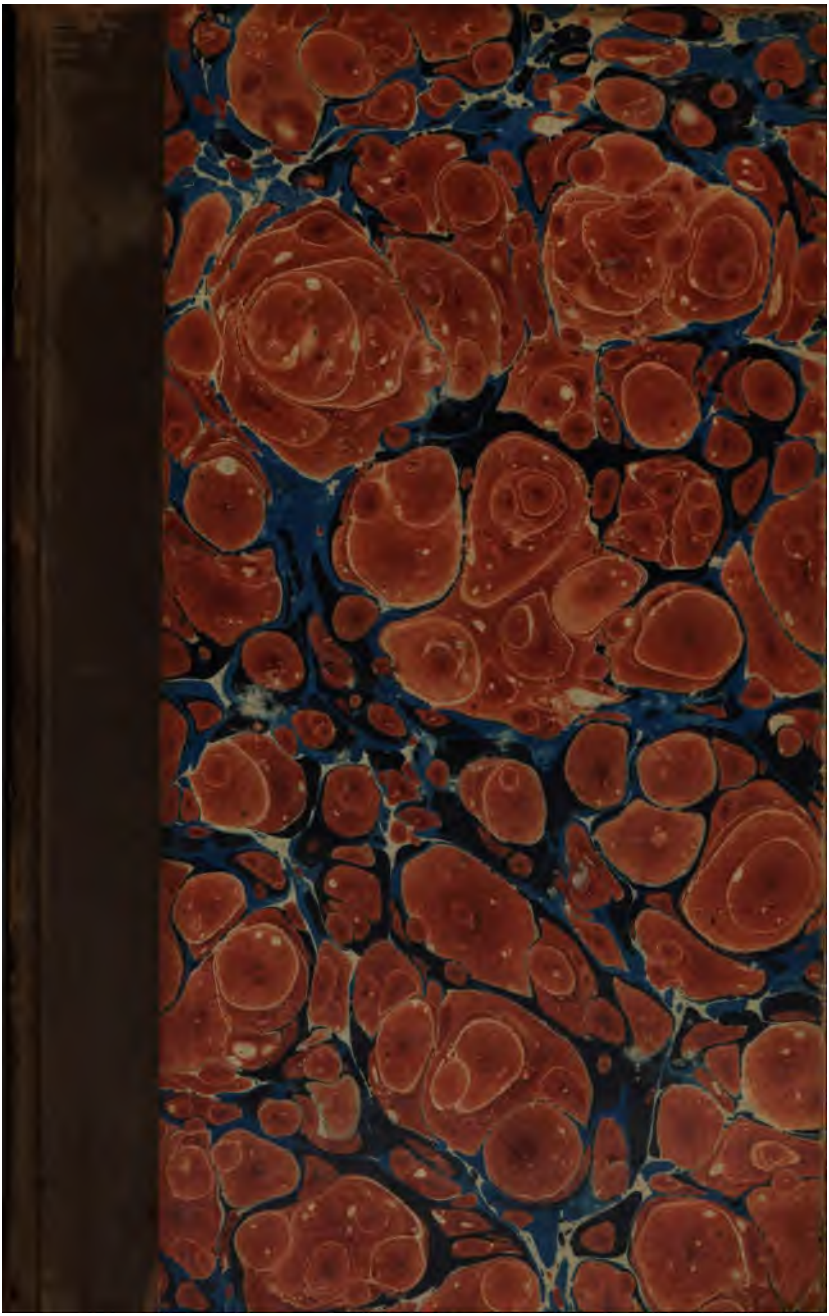

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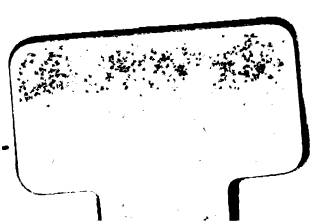

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM

EXAMINED, COMPARED, AND
CONTRASTED,

AS MEANS FOR

PROMOTING HUMAN IMPROVEMENT
AND HAPPINESS.

BY A. SHEPHEARD,
PETERBOROUGH.

LONDON:
JAMES S. HODSON,
112, FLEET STREET.
1840.

345.

Printed by J. S. Hodson, 15, Cross Street, Hatton Garden, London.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

At this time of active and dangerous innovation, when Infidelity, under the specious plea of philanthrophy, is endeavouring to undermine the religious faith and to subvert the civil institutions of society, and further, to deprave its morals by insidiously professing to reform them through false philosophy;—at this time, it is to be hoped, that the honest though humble attempts of an individual to become one of the opposers and exposers of the injurious and delusive doctrines promulgated to effect such mischievous purposes, will be received by the public with at least the indulgence that may be claimed for right motive. The author, therefore, submits to his countrymen the following pages without other recommendation than the subjects appeal to their feelings and interests, and without pretension to the learning that might secure patronage. Under these disadvantages, he yet presumes to dedicate his work to the public. It was at first intended to deliver what is here written as a lecture, but peculiar circumstances prevented that intention. The bringing of it forward as a publication now seems to the Author sanctioned by the avowed design of Mr. Owen to attempt giving renewed and increased force to his system by advocating its principles through a newspaper (The British Empire) that has lately presented itself to the public notice as the willing vehicle of Mr. Owen's opinions, though at the same time the controvertist of them.

ERRATA.

Page 2, line 19, *insert* are *after* book
—— ·—— 29, *for* Whatever *read* Whatsoever
—— 10, — 5, *insert* the *after* The doctrine of
—— 14, — 3 from bottom, *for* the *read* thy
———— 2 ————, *for* by *read* be
—— 19, — 23, ————, *dele* the note of interrogation and *insert it after* transgressors, line 16 from bottom.
—— 20, — 20, *dele* the comma at the end of the line.
———— 21, *for* An *read* an
—— 23, *dele* the first sentence of the paragraph commencing, This rejection, *and insert* This rejection, and the consequent disastrous downfall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish nation, were not only foretold by the prophets of old to the Jews, but also by Jesus Christ himself, their Incarnate God and Redeemer.
—— 29, line 3 from bottom, *dele* the two notes of interrogation *and insert* dashes —.
—— 31, —. 15 from bottom, *for* law *read* laws

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIALISM

CONTRASTED.

SOCIETY has for some time been disturbed by the attempts of a set of men whose object is to subvert the influence and authority of religion over it. The motive for this attempt I wish not to judge uncharitably of, but whilst their hostility is directed against a system that professes to advocate and promote the cause of human happiness, here and hereafter, and which profession I believe its principles and character justifies our reliance on, I feel that I may, without incurring the imputation of harshly judging, ascribe to these disturbers the lack of that wisdom which sound philosophy has hitherto ever identified with true virtue. To establish the pretensions of the religion which these men assail, and to shew the inferiority of that system which they would introduce as proper to supersede it, is the intention of this address.

In following up this intention, I propose, first, to take up this position in defence of Christianity;—That no false religion could originate from any other cause or causes than these, *Priestcraft*, *Political Expediency*, *Superstitious Enthusiasm*, acting separately or in co-operation; and then shew, as I hope I shall, that Christianity is not chargeable with either of these deceptions, or this delusion, and that therefore it is true.

That I may take up this position and assume it as granted, I claim my right to, from the consideration that no adversary of religion, that I know of, ever thought of attributing religious fraud to any other cause, and because human experience affords no example of its arising in any other way, and because I believe human reason would find it impossible to account for it on any other grounds. In the order I have stated my position, I shall endeavour to maintain it.

First, then, as to Christianity being open to the charge of *Priestcraft*. Any set of men who wished to impose upon their fellow-men a system of religion as true, which they knew to be false, must have a motive for it; that is, on moral principle, honest or dishonest; and they must have in view some advantage to be derived from it that was either a selfish one, or that was an advantage generally. Now if the motive were honest, we should look for the advantage to be general; and if the advantage prove to be general, we should naturally conclude the motive honest; and if the motive be honest we should also conclude that the

promoters and procurers of this general benefit asserted t truth, being actuated in what they did by such motive. But the motive were dishonest, we should look for the advanta sought to be a selfish one, and if it were a selfish one it cou scarcely fail of discovering its principles in the working out its ends, and the falsehood of the promoters and procurers of th end would as conclusively be proved. If, then, the religion I a arguing about be really one of priestcraft, such an one as its en mies accuse it of being, let us enquire what are the advantage aimed at by the priesthood in palming it upon mankind. Ca they be other than those sought for by all other knaves whos policy is dictated by selfishness? Could other motives actuat them than the gratification of those two darling passions of falle human nature,—ambition and avarice? How do the priesthoo seek to achieve this purpose? To make their spurious religio the power by which they render others the tools to work ou their own aggrandizement and enrichment, the priesthood delive to them a system of religion contained in the book called the Bible, in which book, are commands purporting to come from the Supreme Being (whose ambassadors and delegates they profess themselves to be), and whose commands mankind, as coming from the Creator, Benefactor, and Judge of the world, could *not* doubt it was incumbent on them to obey. As the obligatory duty of obedience rests on such rational grounds, it is presumed that they had no difficulty in making known his will as a rule of conduct, for those of whom obedience is required,—hence the reception of Christianity. And what is the principle of this rule of conduct, insisted upon for their most special observance? The Bible sums it up in these few words; "Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Now examine this principle in all its bearings and relations, as it regards the duty of husband to wife, wife to husband, father to son, son to father, brother to sister, sister to brother, master to servant, servant to master, neighbour to neighbour, friend to friend, and, in fine and in general, man to man; and then say how such inculcations are calculated to compass the ends proposed by a policy that adopted fraud as a means of attaining the selfish ends of ambition and avarice, or any other ends merely selfish. Let me ask, Does it require any sacrifice of property justly acquired? Does it impose any restraint on natural liberty which only avails itself of that freedom that is void of offence or injury to others? Does it detract from the enjoyments of social intercourse? Does it retard or prevent the progress of civilization? Above all, is it in the way of moral enlightenment? I fearlessly say, No; but that the principle is the promoter and conservator of public justice, and public liberty, and every public good. And I would further ask, How could the teachers of this principle so exempt themselves from its obligations, as to make it answer the purpose of their design? Would not the consciousness of the impracticability of this, rather have inclined them to have hoped and

trusted for success to that species of priestcraft that the world had furnished them with examples of, for their encouragement, by its prevalent and common success? I say, would they not have addressed themselves to the superstitious fears and feelings existing through the ignorance that, in early times more generally, pervaded the world, rather than have hazarded their project by an innovation that was opposed to superstition and ignorance? If, then, the principles of Christianity have a tendency to promote the happiness and welfare of mankind, which of these two causes have most likely been the originating one;—the Author of man, who can do no other than will the welfare of man,—or a set of subtle, selfish men, who sought in imposture, what they conceived tended to the furtherance of their own particular welfare and interests? But then deists will perhaps point to the perversions of this religious system by the ministering professors of it, and, in descrying that it has given an opportunity for the acquirement of wealth undeserved, for the indulgence of indolence and luxury incompatible with moral virtue, for the gaining of power unjustly, and for the exercise of it tyrannically, and that the tyranny may be imputed to the pride which the first-mentioned abuses have engendered, will perhaps conclude that they have triumphantly affixed the stigma of priestcraft on the Christian religion. But, be it remembered, it is not the purpose of this address to defend or vindicate the perversions of the priesthood. It cannot be denied that those perversions, in some instances (and in one particular instance), have been flagrant; yet I assert, this goes to strengthen the arguments I have advanced for the truth of religion, viz., the Christian religion, for it is only by a perversion of it that it can be made to subserve the policy of priestcraft. The most palpable and glaring proof of this is exhibited in the papal establishment, the aim and intention of which may justly be suspected, as making religion the instrument of a spiritual despotism, that has procured for its ruling members wealth, luxury, and a tyrannic power; and that has enabled those rulers to trample on the natural rights and liberties of mankind. To make good this accusation, and to vindicate myself from the charge of injustice towards the Church of Rome, let me appeal to the well-known policy and practice admitted to be that of the papacy. Has not the Roman Church, under the specious pretence of guarding the Holy Scripture from dangerous and erroneous interpretations, withheld them from the inspection and use of those who are of their own communion, and constituted itself, by impious and absurd assumption, the only infallible interpreters of Scripure? As a further assistance to this crafty scheme for rendering its interpretations conducive to the support of papal fraud, have they not invented a tradition for which they claim an authority equal to that of Scripture, and by which, like the Pharisees of old, they make the Word of God of no effect, that is to say, of no effect other than that of covering their own designs, and suppressing,

with the suppression of Scripture, the evidence and condemnation of their own venality? Does not the Church of Rome also teach a doctrine, and claim for itself a power, of absolution, that is not only without Scripture warranty, but directly subversive of the tendency of that salutary and encouraging doctrine of absolution which Scripture does warrant, and which is indeed characteristic of such a religion as reason would incline us to receive as true? And is not the power of this perversion further strengthened by the sale of indulgences,—an expedient equally calculated rather to foster than to correct the corruptions of human nature,—a corruption never more effectually taken advantage of by priestcraft, nor more decidedly displayed, than when priestcraft has made its dupes idolators in their mode of worship. For could priestly cunning further remove its victims from the influences of genuine religion than by thus misleading the mind in its apprehensions of the attributes of the Deity. How is a thing, the work of the creatures' own hands, fitted for raising the mind to a just and rational contemplation of the infinite perfections of the Creator of himself and the world? To this fallacy in the mode of exciting devotional piety, the Church of Rome adds many others that impose upon the senses, and support that blind superstition which makes man satisfied with, and gratified by, the ignorance that allows him the indulgence of sensuality.

As a member of the Church of England, I desire to evince my sincerity in the cause of religion, by a candour that will not let the abuses in her establishment go without comment. With others, I heartily deplore that a church, the doctrines of which are so truly scriptural, and that has a liturgical service in pure harmony therewith, and ceremonies agreeable to the feelings and inclinations of real and sober piety, should yet have defects in its system, of which the uncandid and ignorant enemies of religion will avail themselves as arguments against religious truth. It cannot be denied that church emolument, through the improper arrangements for its application, has proved, in too many instances, the cause of introduction into the church, as ministers, men whose lives, conduct, and character, might give occasion for the enemies of religion to point to them, as proofs that religion was a contrivance for the advancement of personal worldly interest. But the well-disposed will be ready to acknowledge that these arguments, drawn from the ill character and conduct of some few, and though few, too many, ministers of the church, are not fair arguments against religion, and cannot weigh with those whose desire to find the truth, induces them to seek for it. In the Bible it may be found. That book, like the book of nature, declares its author by evidence sufficient for the conviction of those whose qualification for obtaining it, is humble honesty, rather than great learning. To learning I myself make no pretensions, but yet hope to establish my assertion, when I come to that part of my subject which will bring me to compare the inferiority of that system, which a certain class of anti-christians

would introduce as proper to supersede Christianity. In the mean time, I proceed to examine and maintain the second head of my position, viz., *Political Expediency*, as an originating cause of religion.

When we speak of a religion as originating in political expediency, of course we imply that a government has called in its aid, as an agent, for enabling them to rule according to their inclinations. Now as we may assume the religion to be an imposture, the government must stand accused of acting on the principles of fraud and falsehood. A government capable of this, may very rationally and justly be suspected of, nay, condemned for, a desire to rule corruptly; or, in other words, to avail themselves of a power that tends to the gratification of those selfish ends, ambition and avarice, which, as has been stated, political priestcraft may also be accused of having in view. Now corrupt practices can scarcely be maintained by other inculcations than those emanating from corrupt principles. Let us, then, ask, What is there, that is favourable to corruption, to be found in the principles inculcated by our religion, in reference to its political sanctions. It indeed says, "Fear God and honour the king." "The powers that be are of God, whoso therefore that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinances of God." That governments are necessary for the well-being of society, for the protection of person and property, and for the maintenance of that order which conduces to the comfort of social intercourse, I suppose nobody will dispute or deny. This seems agreeable to reason and the laws of nature. Should there be any surprise, then, that the God of nature, in his revealed will, should enjoin obedience to governments by such precepts as I have quoted? But let it be remembered that the same authority requires of kings and governors that they *love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with their God.* It requires of the prince, as imperatively as of the peasant, the practice of every moral duty, and inculcates the reciprocity of justice in such a way, as levels all distinction between high and low, rich and poor, in their responsibility to its obligations. Does not religion, then, prescribe for governments the genuine laws of liberty? Would to God governments would adopt them, and afford the governed reasons for mutual congratulation that religion had originated the government! The connexion between church and state would then be such an one as might not justly be complained of as a grievance; for piety and patriotism would go hand in hand, human happiness be identified with human interests, and a practical proof given that what was morally right could not be politically wrong.

I now come to the third head of my position to be considered, *Superstitious Enthusiasm.* In my attempt to disprove this to be the originating cause of our religion, it may be proper for me, first, to define what I mean by superstitious enthusiasm. What I understand by it, and what I suppose is understood by others of it, in relation to the subject now discussed, is this; erroneous

notions, through ignorance of the Supreme Being, who, as the creator, benefactor, and judge of the world, is the proper object of adoration and obedience, and the consequent misconception of our duty towards him and towards our fellow-creatures, through this ignoronce; and that the wrong sentiments so imbibed are brought into action by the excitement of high and heated feeling, and which feeling may also have had some considerable share in being the cause of wrong notions. Assuming this to be superstitious enthusiasm, let me then inquire what evidence Christianity affords in itself of being originated by it? First, What does it unfold to us in declaring the attributes of the Supreme Being? It represents him to us as self-existent, as infinitely powerful, infinitely wise, every where present, everlasting; and, in condescension to our faculties and feelings, as infinitely just and merciful. Did the soundest philosophy ever represent him otherwise to our judgment? How then does this accord with ignorance, with the ignorance that begets false notions of the Deity? And, secondly, as to the state or quality of feeling which brings into action the sentiments the mind has imbibed through religious influence, How does Christianity encourage that which co-operates with ignorance, in making delusion an active principle? Christianity indeed demands a zealous discharge of duty, but it also requires that our zeal should be according to knowledge, and declares that knowledge to be an understanding and just appreciation of our moral and religious obligations; and those obligations, as they relate to God and man, the soundest philosophy has also proved to be conducive to the best interests and welfare of mankind—satisfactorily proved it. But the most satisfactory proof is derived from the experience of those who live by the rules which religious and moral duty prescribe. Infidelity, captious as it is, and keen in its scrutiny, has never yet controverted Christian morality in any other way than that which established the wisdom of Christian precept through the disquisition. What grounds are there, then, for charging Christianity with originating in superstitious enthusiasm? Having, as I hope I have, shown that Christianity, being opposed in principle to priestcraft, political expediency, and superstitious enthusiasm, separately considered, they could not either of them separately have originated it. I therefore deem it superfluous to show that they could not have effected its origin by co-operation, because this seems to me to be as rational a supposition, or inference, as it would be to account for a system of fraud, folly, and injustice, as having originated in the combined operations of honesty, wisdom, and goodness. But notwithstanding all that can be adduced in proof of the truth of Christianity, infidelity cannot, or will not, be convinced of it. Yet, in these our days, infidelity affects to feel so deep an interest in human welfare, and is so concerned for society on account of the sufferings inflicted on it by moral evil, that it is zealously employed in establishing a

system of its own to supersede Christianity, which it impugns as one cause of the evil; a system, the superiority of which is to be evinced by its power to so effectually and extensively promote the happiness of mankind, that the expected and wished for millenium of Christians will cease to be a desideratum as this new system obtains an influence over the world.

How far the pretensions of this system are to be relied on, I will endeavour to ascertain by a comparison of its professed principles with those of Christianity, and with the power of the motive each system has to urge for the adoption and observance of what it inculcates.

The acknowledged necessity for either system is the moral and physical evil prevailing in the world. This evil is by each system attributed to separate and different causes. Christianity ascribes it to an innate corruption in human nature derived from the first parents of mankind, and consequent to them and to their posterity, and with it a forfeiture of happiness and immortality, as a punishment for failure in the observance of those conditions on which that happiness and immortality depended. And Christianity teaches that the just and merciful Author of man, who put him in this probationary state, as a remedy for the evil brought on him through disobedience, promised restoration to him and to all his posterity through an atonement to be made for their sin of disobedience, by which they might escape its penalties, if they would accept and perform the conditions that will alone make that atonement available. Of course this implies man to be still an accountable being, in a probationary state, preparing him for a future one.

From reading a statement of Mr. Owen's, as published by the "Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists," and called "Outline of the Rational System of Society," I infer the principles of the system, and shall appeal to it as an authority for my inference and the correctness of my statements. From this statement, then, I learn that Mr. O. ascribes the moral and physical evil prevailing in the world to the ignorance in which man is, as to what he is, what society is, what constitutes happiness, and how it is to be insured; and as a basis on which his reforming system is to be founded, shows what man is, and how he may be acted upon, so as to render the proposed end, universal happiness, attainable and attained.

In doing this, he represents man as a being compounded of animal propensities, intellectual faculties, and moral qualities; and that so constituted, his character is formed as these attributes are proportionately united in him, and as this organization receives excitement, or is acted upon by external circumstances, —his organization, and the external circumstances continually acting and reacting each upon the other from the time of birth to his death. But though Mr. O. invests man with the attributes of intellectual faculties and moral qualities, yet in showing the effects of the reciprocal action of his organization and ex-

ternal circumstances, he seems to consider him the mere creature of circumstances, and therefore not in a situation that should make him a responsible being, he being in a state that gives but little of free-will. Assuming that I have so far rightly given Mr. Owen's explanation of what man is, I shall content myself with two or three remarks on that, as furnishing sufficient grounds for objection to his opinion and assertion as to the cause of evil, moral and physical. In offering these remarks, I also take for granted what Mr. O. himself allows, that man owes his existence to a cause infinitely wise and powerful, and that willed his happiness. Man, then, owing his existence to an infinitely wise and powerful Creator, who willed his happiness unconditionally, it is rationally to be presumed, that if he be the created creature of circumstances, and irresponsible, that his Creator would have so organized and circumstanced him that no unhappiness could have arisen from the acting and re-acting of his organization, and the external circumstances he was exposed to. And had he intended man should have been irresponsible, and that his happiness should not at all depend upon the results of probation, why should man be liable to a breach of any of those laws of nature, on the observance of which laws the happiness of human beings so evidently depends? Or, why should man be conscious of moral right or moral wrong? Why susceptible of compunction or satisfaction, as he is affected with the sense of acting, according to moral right or wrong? The wisdom, power, and goodness of God is sufficiently displayed in creation to assure us that God could, as no doubt he would, have exempted his creatures from the chances of evil, if he had so willed that man's happiness should not have at all depended on his own conduct in a probationary state. On the presumption that Mr. O. is right in asserting man to be the creature of circumstances and irresponsible, and right in ascribing moral evil (the cause of unhappiness to man and society) to man's ignorance of what he is, what society is, &c. &c., through which ignorance he does not surround himself with those external circumstances that would render him happy; on this supposition, I say, how is it to be accounted for that his Creator, who willed his happiness, should for nearly 6000 years have left him to the action of such circumstances as must have, and has, to a great extent, defeated the benevolent designs of his Creator towards him, and all through letting him lack that knowledge which Mr. O. professes himself competent to impart? To pursue this argument a little further, let us contemplate the amount and extent of human misery consequent to the human race through ignorance only. Think of the countless millions that have been sufferers through the perversion of their own passions, and through the perverted passions of others. Think of what murders, what cruelty, what injustice, ambition and avarice, and other modes of selfishness, have given rise to. Think of the complicated agonizing ills

resulting to the victims of sensuality. Think, if you can call them to mind, of all the various calamities that have afflicted mankind within 6000 years; and will you not then be ready to ask, Why did not the Creator endue man with the knowledge necessary for his happiness? or why did he not in earlier, much earlier times, nay, from the first of time, so let man be circumstanced as to have had the instruction of so wise, so virtuous, so philanthropic a character as Mr. Owen, and thus have averted or prevented such accumulation of woe? Until I come to that part of Mr. Owen's system which he designates "The Principles and Practice of the Rational Religion," I shall say no more in opposition to Mr. Owen's doctrine of the original cause of moral and physical evil, than that I hope to show, as the advocate of the verity of Scripture, that the Deity may be vindicated from the imputation on his justice, mercy, power, and wisdom (indirectly implied by Mr. Owen's opinion), by accounting for moral and physical evil reasonably, on the grounds which Scripture informs us was the cause of it.

The information Scripture gives us on this point no doubt every one is, or may be, acquainted with; I shall, therefore, and for connexion's sake only, but recapitulate my former summary of it.

Christianity, then, ascribes moral and physical evil to an innate corruption in human nature, derived from the first parents of mankind, and consequent to them and to their posterity, and with it a forfeiture of happiness and immortality, as a punishment for failure in the observance of those conditions on which that happiness and immortality depended. And Christianity teaches, that the just and merciful Author of man, who put him in this probationary state, as a remedy for the evil brought on him through disobedience, promised restoration to him and to all his posterity through an atonement to be made for their sin of disobedience, by which they might escape its penalties if they would accept and perform the conditions that will alone make that atonement available. Of course this implies man to be still an accountable being, in a probationary state, preparing him for a future one.

By this statement, man is of course an intelligent free agent, and an accountable being. That he was so once in a superior degree, as regards his nature, may reasonably be inferred from the evidence there is of his being so now in an inferior degree as regards his nature. To establish my inference I shall first adduce evidence of his present state of rational free agency and responsibility. To procure assent to his rational free agency, besides what has been advanced on that head, I conclude I need but appeal to the common convictions and consent of mankind, as proved by their pursuing the business, pleasures, interests, and duties of the world, as if they possessed the consciousness and acted under the belief of it. As it is the peculiar doctrines that Mr. O. has given rise to, that questions the rational free agency of man, and makes such appeal necessary, I more par-

ticularly make the appeal to Mr. O. himself, and ask him whether his attempt to establish his new system shews him to be so much the creature of circumstances as that he is not a rational free agent. Does he not in this attempt claim intellectual free agency as his attribute? The doctrine of rational intelligent free agency of man, then, being admitted, may not that of his responsibility be rationally inferred from it? For is it not likely that his Creator should cause him to be so circumstanced as that his faculties should be brought into action by means calculated to promote the right use and purpose of those faculties? Now consider the effects of responsibility, as it is shewn in its application for furthering the success of human designs that shall have a beneficial aim, and to accomplish which human agency is necessary and resorted to, what proves so effectual and safe a means for securing the desired end as the making of the feelings of responsibility become the motive for the agents' performing what is required of them? And how do human beings become susceptible of those feelings, but through and by the co-operation of reason and conscience, which are ever active as approvers or reprovers of human conduct, affecting them with pleasurable satisfaction or painful regret, as their actions are morally right or morally wrong. Is there not in the very office of reason and conscience evidence of responsibility, and also proof that man is not so much the creature of circumstances as Mr. O. represents him; for in whatever circumstances he may be placed, the intimations of reason and conscience are to him both a guard and a guide. The power of this principle has shewn itself in the character and conduct of every people on the earth, more or less, from the earliest to the present time. I mean not to say that its influence may not be so diminished and enfeebled as to render it almost useless, and to become, as it were, almost extinct. Unhappily in these our days we have proof it may, proof in the character and conduct of those who dispute its existence and authority. But may not this diminution of its efficacy be rightly attributed to that which deteriorates the human nature in every other respect, viz., the abuse of the passions? Is it uncharitable to infer that a fondness for indulgence that amounts to abuse, should induce a disinclination to obey the monitory principle, and ultimately stifle its appeals, so as to extinguish its efficiency? But what appears to me to be the most important result from the effects of probation and responsibility, and therefore strongest argument for its being our state, is, the sense and impression it begets of our dependence on an all-wise, all-powerful, and beneficent Creator.

From these arguments in proof of the rational free agency and accountability of man in his present state of inferior nature, I would adduce those that shew him to have been responsibly situated in a former probationary state of superior nature; and that this first state of man was agreeable to the Scripture account

of original happiness and the fall from it. I found my arguments on these grounds,—that though it has been shewn, and must reasonably be admitted, that a state of probation whereby human beings become responsible ones, is a state well calculated to develope their powers and qualities, and to promote the exercise of them to right ends and purposes, and more particularly to beget and impress on the creature a proper sense of his dependence on the Creator. Yet it does not appear that the test or trial should or must necessarily be founded on such circumstances of the creature's nature, as imply imperfections and weaknesses that indeed amount to depraved frailties, and which give the tested but a desperate chance for success in their trial. But the character and conduct of mankind ever has shewn, and now exhibits, depraved frailties, that, without assistance to man, must render the fulfilling of the obligations of moral responsibility most difficult, if not altogether impracticable. If, then, no satisfactory reason can be given to prove the necessity of a frail state to constitute a probationary and responsible one, so I think no satisfactory reason can be given to shew why intellectual free agency, might not receive excitement to action from morally and physically correct impulses, as from morally and physically corrupt ones, and yet be under the influence of temptations that constituted probation and implied responsibility. Now as the latter state must be allowed to be most in accordance with the principle, "free to stand or free to fall," which of the two states would the God of justice most likely place an accountable being in? It seems to me, right reason would come to a conclusion in favour of the last mentioned one, and that man's first state of trial was that which the Bible represents it to be, and that his present one is also what the Bible represents it to be,—the consequence of a failure in fulfilling the conditions of the first state. But it is objected, that these consequences impugn the justice of the Deity, inasmuch as they involve in penal accountability those who were not participators in the original act of disobedience.

There is an apparent difficulty in this, which it will be attempted to obviate, but what is the weight of that difficulty, compared with the one Mr. O. has to contend with in establishing the principles of his system? Let us consider the matter, and we shall find the very difficulty does but strengthen the argument in favour of revelation, for whether mankind be in a probationary state or not, that they are in a state, and ever have been, of suffering, from the prevalence and effects of moral and physical evil, cannot be denied; and it is admitted to be the case by Mr. O. himself. As Mr. Owen's system does not suppose or contemplate an hereafter existence nor future retribution, how are the injuries of the virtuous, received through the injustice of the vicious,—the undeserved miseries often resulting from physical causes,—to be reconciled to the mercy and justice of that Being whose further acknowledged and undoubted attributes of wisdom and power then enabled and now enables him to prevent

such suffering in the creatures he has made. Recourse to former arguments is again forced upon me here, and I repeat, Why did he not, in the creation of man, and in the adaptation of him to the circumstances that were to bring his powers and faculties into action, or in the adaptation of circumstances to him for that purpose, so order it that no unhappiness should arise out of the arrangement. The infidel, who considers this state of man a final one, cannot find reasons, that reason approves, for vindicating the goodness of God, but he virtually makes him the author of the evil complained of. To the Christian, revelation clears the difficulty up. He perceives the evil accounted for on grounds that impugn not the honour of his Creator, for he can trace the cause of that evil to man, and ascribe goodness to God in providing a remedy for it. And here it may not be impertinent to remark, that, as to unenlightened humanity,—for man enlightened by revelation cannot be in doubt,—the question of the moral justice and goodness of God must, to a certain degree, be involved in doubt and difficulty, through the effects of the prevalent evil. It is quite agreeable to human reason and human desire that a revelation would and should be made for the purpose of satisfying the hopes and fears of God's creatures as to those his attributes of justice and goodness. Let us, then, examine the Scripture account of the origin of evil, and see how far its existence is reconcileable to the rational and intuitive notions entertained of the goodness and justice of God, and the grounds man has for the belief and grateful acknowledgment of these attributes in the offers made for the cure or reparation of the evil. I have before stated what I here assume to be truth, (assume it on the further evidence I shall give of its being so,) that the most important intention of man's probationary responsibility, was, to beget in and impress upon him a sense of his dependence upon an all-wise, all-powerful, and beneficent Creator, and that a perfect state and simple test was most in accordance with the principle, "free to stand or free to fall," and best calculated for the trial of grateful obedience and humble reliance, and, therefore, that such a state was man's first, might be supposed from the acknowledged justice and goodness of God. And such a state, then, the Scripture represents man's at first to have been. The trial of his obedience, by which he would acknowledge his dependence, was the observance of an injunction that prohibited him from eating of the fruit of a tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A failure in observing this injunction subjected him to the loss of happiness and immortality. The only remark I think it necessary to make on the suitableness of the temptation to Adam's condition is, that as he was in a perfect state of happiness, he could have no desires that, in the present state of man, operate as temptations to him, and that the apparently only way in which he was liable, at least the way in which he was most liable, to be lured from adhesion to his duty, was to raise suspicions in him as to whether grateful obedience

and humble reliance were his duty. To effect this, and destroy his sense of dependence, the Tempter makes the woman the instrument of his treacherous malignancy, by addressing his art to the strong feelings of suspicion and curiosity in her, and thus urge her to become the seducer of her husband. "Yea hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden (lest ye die). Ye shall not die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat of the forbidden tree, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." With the plausibility of truth, the father of lies thus deceived them. They indeed knew what was good before; they now fatally understood what was evil. That one great intention of the trial was to make man sensible of his dependence, must be inferred from the aim of the Tempter, which was evidently to destroy this feeling, and beget rebellious opposition, by encouraging self-sufficiency. It could not be for the purpose of informing God as to whether man would be obedient or no, for how could prescience require that? "Prescience!" say the infidels and enemies to revelation, "allowing prescience to be an attribute of the Deity, how are his justice and mercy to be reconciled to the original fall of man, and the consequent misery and death of the human race? for if God be just and merciful, and has foreknowledge of what will happen, how comes it that his justice and mercy did not prevent the occurrence of the fall, by abstaining from the imposition of probationary conditions,—this his mercy would have dictated. If this fall, then, really did take place, it must have been the intention of God that it should; where, then, is the justice of God in making his creatures responsible?" Before such arguments can claim to be tenable or conclusive, the proposers of them must first shew that the foreknowledge of what happens is the cause of the event, and they must also shew that man was *not* competent to stand, or free to fall. Now, taking infidel cavilers on their own ground, viz., the certainty that justice, mercy, and prescience are attributes of the Deity, I say no one, rightly judging, will recognize in the fall of man an imputation on the truth of Scripture in recording that fall, nor on the attributes of God in permitting it; but every one rightly judging will recognise those attributes in the provisions made by God for the remedy or reparation of that fall, and gratefully acknowledge his justice and mercy by an obedient compliance with the conditions that will render the offered atonement available, out of which conditions the present probationary state of man arises; a state in which the Christian is taught not to look for perfect happiness, but to expect, sometimes, wo. It forbids not enjoyment, when it is procured by virtuous means, and by such means it promotes it, even here; and in the experience of wo it teaches the resignation that lightens affliction. The adoption of Christian principle by the Christian, as a moral and religious rule, prevents disappointments and distresses being the cause of impatient repining in life, and of despair or reproach of his Maker in death, should

his life have been one of suffering; for in death those sufferings coming to a close, if he have borne them as revelation teaches him to bear, are at the last a cause of rejoicing to him; he thinks of the infliction but as a merciful providence intended to discipline and prepare him for existence in that peaceful blissful paradise where sighing and sorrowing are no more, and where happiness, it is reasonable to suppose, is enhanced by the assurance of its being uninterrupted and eternal. Does Mr. Owen's philosophy more satisfactorily establish and justify the divine attributes of justice and mercy, or tend more to the happiness of man here? Let us see.

The Socialist, who has no hope nor expectation beyond this life, looks for happiness in this world only, and not feeling himself a responsible being, seeks for and pursues that happiness by and through such means as he considers reason justifies. And as his reason points him out the creature of circumstances, it is more than probable that circumstances may as often lead him to morally indirect as to morally direct means for accomplishing his aim. And circumstances may also so occur that he fails both ways. What has he, then, to console him for his disappointments and sufferings whilst he lives? what to cheer him when he dies? Not hope! This the Christian has, and were that hope founded on only slight grounds, his situation at the last were a thousand times to be preferred before the Socialist's. What is its preference, then, founded on the concurrence of reason and conscience in acknowledging the divine mercy and justice to have been displayed in a dispensation that repairs the transient sufferings he has had, with an eternity of happiness he is about to enjoy! Contemplate the state of man in each light, and say which of the two causes of evil appears to be the most probable one, when man is considered in the relation in which he stands to his Maker?

Having taken into consideration the causes assigned by each system for the origin of moral and physical evil, and offered some arguments to shew the superior claims of Scripture to our belief on reasonable grounds, I shall proceed in the comparison of the respective merits of Christianity and Mr. O.'s system, by considering each as the proposed cure for the evil, moral and physical. The Scripture declares a cure in a merciful dispensation of providence, intimated to man at his fall, by prophetic metaphor, in pronouncing sentence against the offenders, as punishment of the offence that caused the fall. To the serpent, which was the Tempter's instrument in procuring that fall, God addresses this retributive denunciation; "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise the head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Or as it may perhaps by rightly understood, "As thou hast been the instrument of man's

fall and misery, so shalt thou remain a memorial to him of what his real enemy is that wrought his sad unhappiness through thee—accursed in thy nature shalt thou appear by thy abject crawling, and by thy loathsome food, which, though life to thee, to all besides would be but death, of which it is the emblem. And in thy faculties and feelings too, shalt thou also typify man's foe,—subtle and malignant shalt thou be. And through this thy nature, an enmity subsist between the woman's seed and thine, an enmity that shall bring retributive punishment on thee, and final restoration to those who will let that enmity keep them from the danger of thy wiles; for a champion shall arise of their own kind, who shall defeat thy envious malice, and triumph, for them, over Satan, sin, and death, though in his struggle with satanic power, he may receive such injury as comparatively is like bruising of the heel that is employed in crushing of that evil power, by bruising the vital part where it resides,—thy head." Here, at the commencement of the operation of the system, is an union of providence with prophecy, and as the plan of providence progressed, so was prophecy concomitant, each becoming clearer and more explicit of its purpose, as the final effecting of that purpose approached and was completed in the fulfilment of one by the other. After the first dark shadowy intimation of the promised rescue through the woman's seed, the next more prominent indication of the divine plan is discovered in the call of Abram. The effects of Adam's transgression were in process of time shewn by the knowledge of the true God becoming so obscured as to be almost lost to the world, that was given up to gross and ignorant idolatry. It then pleased God to select and elect from among his creatures a peculiar people, through whom that knowledge should be revived and preserved. For this purpose Abram was called, as the Scripture records in these words: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country (Chaldæa) and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Some years after Abram had obeyed this command of God, it pleased God to manifest his power and his will towards him in a way that, whilst it was expressive of his goodness to him in granting a wish that had long before been expressed, should, at the same time, be a miraculously typical representation of the means by which he would fulfil his other great promises to him, viz., that in him should all nations of the earth be blessed. Abraham, having desired a son that might be his heir, was assured that the desire should be gratified; and so it was, but under circumstances so out of the common course of nature, that only the Being that instituted the laws of nature could so controul them as that the desire should be gratified. A son was born to him when he was an hundred years

old, and of a wife so nearly his own age, that it had long "ceased to be with her (Sarah) after the manner of women." This was surely intended to be typical of the miraculous conception of the Messiah; and the remarkable incident recorded in memory of the faith of Abraham is another striking instance of symbolical parallelism in the characteristics of Abraham's son with the Son of God. The incident I refer to, of course, is understood to be the trial of that faith, in God's requiring Abraham to sacrifice his son, his only son, in whom the patriarch, it cannot be doubted, was well pleased. What God required of Abraham, the Scripture tells us, he had prepared to comply with, and would have performed, had not divine interposition prevented the act; Jehovah took occasion from the circumstance of this act of faith to pronounce his approbation of it by a confirmatory renewal of those promises by which Abram had been assured that God would bless him, particularly in his seed, through which he would become a blessing to all nations—a promise that would be fulfilled in the sacrifice of that son of Abram, which was the Lamb slain, in the council of God, from the foundation of the world. "My son, God will provide himself a lamb," was the reply of Abraham to his son; and in the prevention of human sacrifice, God directed the view of Abraham to a ram, caught by his horns in a thicket, which he was commanded to immolate instead of his son. In his mind's eye, he, no doubt, prophetically saw the lamb which God had provided for the sins of the world. "Your father Abraham," said the Messiah to the Jews, "rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." To this son of Abraham (Isaac), the promises made to his father were renewed, and providences were displayed that sufficiently intimated that these promises were in course of fulfilment. There was an early and visible proof that the descent of the Messiah was according to divine appointment, and not according to the regulation of human affairs; for at the twin birth of Isaac's children (Esau and Jacob), circumstances indicated that the precedence would belong to the younger, contrary to the received and acted-upon law of primogeniture; and this happened through the partiality of Isaac's wife for her younger son Jacob. That the younger son was chosen by God, as the instrument of carrying on his designs, was abundantly shewn by the incidents of his life, and particularly as they have reference to the character and fate of his son Joseph, whose history, throughout, must be regarded as a typical epitome of the character and life of the promised Saviour. To Jacob were born twelve sons, patriarchs, from whom sprang the twelve tribes that formed the Jewish nation, and to whom Jacob delivered a celebrated prophecy, in the blessings pronounced by him upon them, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shilo come, and to him shall the gathering of the people be." How this was fulfilled, the Jewish history testifies. The twelve tribes, it is well known, sojourned in Egypt, whither the superintending providence of God had brought Joseph first, to be the saviour of his family.

After the death of Joseph, and when the Israelites had multiplied to a degree that caused a jealous fear of them in the Egyptians, and who, in consequence of this feeling towards them, sought their destruction, and grievously afflicted and oppressed them, it pleased God again to interfere on their behalf, in furtherance of his great design. He procured deliverance for them through many signal acts of his power, and under the guidance and government of Moses, appointed by him their leader, who also bore striking affinity in his character, as an earthly deliverer from bondage, to him who was to be their deliverer from the bondage of sin, and their leader into a heavenly country. As a lawgiver, he shewed himself eminently wise and just; and almost all his instituted ordinances had figurative reference to the character and office of Christ, who was to be spiritually at once their sacrifice, high priest, and king, and in whom these types were literally fulfilled; to which correspondent characteristics he also added that of prophet; and in this the parallelism was remarkably striking from the coincidence of their predictions, which particularly related to the state of Judea, and to the Jews themselves after their dispersion into all other countries. And here it may not be impertinent to introduce a remark on certain laws given by Moses, as commanded by God, viz., those that relate to the sabbatical years, the jubilee, and the feasts. By the first they were required to abstain from the cultivation of their land every seven years, and trust to its spontaneous production; as also to do the same every fiftieth year, when the Jubilee was celebrated; at which time it would occur that their land would lie uncultivated for two successive years. By the observance of the law relating to feasts, all their male population, who were of mature age (young children and old men being exempt) would appear before the Lord three times a-year at Jerusalem. Now I affirm that the very enactment of these laws are an evidence of divine authority for them, and therefore of the truth of Scripture; for is it to be supposed that if Moses was only an ambitious leader of the Israelites, who would make religious or superstitious imposture one of the instruments of working out his ends, that he would have adopted such laws as which, if they had originated only in human policy, must necessarily directly and obviously tend to defeat those ends? Is it, I say, to be supposed that one, conscious of only ambitious motives, would have risked the real interest, nay very existence of the people he governed, and by whose physical and political strength his greatness was to be promoted; would he, I say, wish them to have trusted to the spontaneous production of the earth for their support every seventh year, and every forty-ninth and fiftieth year in succession (for at the jubilee it must occur twice together), if the law had not been commanded by that Supreme Being whose power had before time been miraculously exerted and exercised for the sustenance of his people in the wilderness, and who had

thus convinced them that "man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4). The same reasoning holds good with respect to the feasts. Had not the Israelites possessed themselves of Judea by driving out the Canaanites, &c. &c., the former inhabitants? And had they not by this made enemies of them and the surrounding neighbouring nations where they, the fugitives, were sheltered? Under such circumstances would a politic and martial leader of a people, with ambitious views for himself, have enacted a law which, three times in the year, required all the male population of the country, that were of mature age for efficient service, to assemble in the interior of it for religious worship, and thus leave the country unguarded and defenceless on its borders, giving an opportunity to their vindictive enemies of ravaging and despoiling in revenge, or of repossessing by conquest the country that was once theirs? Would the Israelites themselves have submitted to a law like this, if they had not before experienced the protection of him who commanded its enactment—experienced it in a way that gave them confidence of safety in their apparent insecurity? In either case Moses must have lost his authority over the people he would govern, by an attempt to establish such laws; and this must be so plainly understood by him, that unless he had enacted them in obedience to the command professed to be received from God, he never would have made the attempt. Or, had this part of Jewish history been fabulous, how could it, with such seeming inconsistencies, have answered the purpose of religious imposition? But we have the testimony of the Jews of the present time, that their ancestors acknowledged the obligations of these laws and abided by them; not but that on some occasions they were rebelliously guilty of a breach of them, as they were of every other law. Their captivity for seventy years in Babylon was a punishment for breaking these as well as the laws against idolatry, &c. It is said in Scripture they were carried away captive, that their land might enjoy its Sabbaths.—From Moses to Samuel, the Israelites experienced variety of fortunes under judges and leaders that ruled them, during when many memorable providences shewed them to be under the power, protection, and guidance of an Almighty arm, that, as occasion required, sustained them in difficulties and dangers, and chastised their frequent derelictions from duty to him. With Saul began the kingly government, but Saul was not of the tribe from whence Messiah should spring. His successor David was, and he was signally the earthly designation of the heavenly King that was to descend from him, and emphatically to be denominated his Son. David in his Psalms prophetically describes Messiah in all the important offices of his character. From the reign of David until the fulness of time, when the Jewish dynasty should be consummated, the Messiah anointed, and the Jewish polity destroyed, many events

occurred, and many prophecies were delivered, that, in their meaning, strongly and informingly, though mostly figuratively, pointed to the great event that would shew how the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, and how in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The prophecies of Isaiah have, in a greater degree than those of any other prophet, peculiar reference to the character and office of the great Redeemer. Striking and surprising as must appear to us the correspondence between his predictions and the events that fulfilled them, yet to those, and particularly the Jewish nation who lived previous to the completion of them, and whom prophecy had taught to expect a Messiah—taught to expect him as the promised seed of the great father of their nation, in whom all other nations of the earth were to be blessed; to the Jews, I say, one portion of Isaiah's prophecy, if they consider it relative to Messiah, must appear full of apparent contradiction, or of inexplicable mystery. Whilst they contemplated his great character from its earliest beginning, as a child to be born of a virgin, whose name should be called Immanuel, in proof of his origin and purpose being divine; when they contemplated its further development in the prediction as thus designated, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Councillor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever;" and who by Haggai is also described as "the desire of all nations?" how could they reconcile the identity of this character with that described as one "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" as one "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities;" as one "oppressed and afflicted;" "brought as a lamb to the slaughter;" "taken from prison and from judgment;" "cut off out of the land of the living," "and in his death numbered with the transgressors." It could only be reconciled to them and to us after the events of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ had shewn their agreement—shewn how it had pleased the Lord that he should be stricken for the transgressions of his people; that his soul should be made an offering for sin; that he should see his seed, prolong his days, and that "the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand." And what was that pleasure, but that the seed of the woman, having endured the enmity of the seed of the serpent in all the various ways which the moral evil introduced by the serpent's guile could be made instrumental to the expression of that enmity, should, in the person of one who was especially the seed of the woman, being born of a pure virgin, triumph for them over their malignant foe that figuratively bruised his heel in the conflict, and who by his triumph figuratively bruised the serpent's head, destroyed

his power, and restored fallen man to the opportunity of regaining life immortal, through obedience and faith in the atonement made for disobedience. But does not the very seeming contradiction of these prophecies afford evidence that they were not of human device? For had they been framed for continuing and carrying on religious imposture, would those representations of the regal glory of the Messiah have been brought into discredit by the descriptions of his humble, degraded, suffering state, and ignominious death? circumstances not only so opposite to what these prophecies declare of his glory, but what others also declare of him as a conqueror, and which are also so absolutely opposite to every natural idea the Jews and mankind would entertain of an exalted personage like a Messiah who was to be a Saviour and a deliverer. Besides, how could the intended fraud be carried on by an after attempt at fulfilment of the prophecies in both characters. Had the prophetic description been confined to that of regal power and conquest, so agreeable to the natural notions entertained by the Jews of Messiahship, and who were expectingMessiah when Jesus Christ came, viz., at the time when they were under subjugation to the Roman power, An ambitious impostor starting up then might have done so with some chance of success, by availing himself of the prediction, and seeking to fulfil it; for the Jews, at the time of our Saviour's appearance, were so impressed with the belief of his being the promised and desired Messiah, and so anxious to have the advantage they expected from him, that they took him by force and would have made him a king. But his intimations that his kingdom was not of this world, was such disappointment to their preconceived wishes and hopes, that it may justly be considered a principal reason with them for rejecting him; and not only because he disappointed their hopes, but because he also offended their strong national and natural prejudices; for in his conversational contention with some of their great men, he indirectly sanctions the payment of tribute to Cæsar. But would an impostor have attempted a fulfilment of the prediction in the suffering part of Christ's character? Could an individual effect deception in that, or could he have done it through collusive assistance? Would fraud and imposture, then, have devised it for their purpose? We are sure no deceiver would really have undergone all such degradation, suffering, and death, to carry on a deception, the benefit of which must, with life, be lost to him.

The prophecies of Isaiah, in relation to the Babylonish captivity of the Jews, promised them a return and restoration; in which promise analogical reference is made to their deliverance through Messiah. The prophet Jeremiah, who also predicted the same things, does it also in the same two-fold manner, making the return from the Babylonish captivity typical of their deliverance from the captivity of sin through Messiah; in reference to whose miraculous conception he has these words, "how long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman

shall compass a man." And as to the distinction and difference between the Mosaic ceremonial dispensation and the Christian spiritual one that was to supersede it, he thus speaks; "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah? not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Jeremiah received his prophetic commission in the reign of King Josiah, and lived to see the part of his predictions that were denunciations against the Jews of his time for their wickedness, fulfilled, in the reign of Zedekiah. Their great sin was proneness to idolatry, and to the vices connected with, and causes of, this blind apostacy. They also, as has been noticed, neglected the observance of the sabbatical years; by which disobedience of the divine law, they evinced their distrust in the providence that had preserved and protected them. To punish their idolatry, God gave them into the hands of idolators. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, laid waste their country, burnt and destroyed their glorious temple, built by king Solomon, and carried away into captive exile their great men, that were not put to the sword, and with them a large portion of the population; leaving a portion of the poorest of them as cultivators of the soil. Among the illustrious captives taken to Babylon, was Daniel, of the royal seed. He appears to have been especially chosen, and peculiarly endowed as the servant of heaven, for administering comfort to his countrymen, in the afflictions they had brought on themselves;—for keeping them in the pure worship of God, and for the maintaining God's honour before the idolatrous heathen, until the arrival of the time appointed for their deliverance. This time was pointed out by the prophecies of Jeremiah, &c., and by Daniel himself in that remarkable one, in which, with chronological accuracy, he foretels their return to Jerusalem, and its restoration. The cutting off of the Messiah, as an atonement for sin. The second destruction of the city and sanctuary, and final subversion of the Jewish polity, as it was then constituted. Josephus, the Jewish historian, who wrote under the auspices of the Roman emperor, minutely describes the calamitous catastrophe that fulfilled the prediction of that just retribution for the cutting off Messiah,—a retribution they imprecated upon themselves when, demanding his crucifixion. they cried, "his blood be on us and on our children." To the verity of Josephus, as an historian, the Jews, (enemies of Christianity,) readily assent, to this day. And his account is also corroborated by Roman history. But not less wonderful are Daniel's predictions that describe the rise of four successive empires, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and in Daniel's own vision

of the four beasts that came up out of the sea;—wonderful as instances of the divine prescience and providence, that foresees the progress of the attempts of human beings in the exercise of their free-will, yet so controuls them, on principles of justice and mercy, as to make even the evil purposes of ambition lead to the general and ultimate good of his creatures.

Besides these predictions, Daniel delivered others, equally astonishing, as instances of divine inspiration; but I have thought it sufficient for my purpose to confine myself to the quotation of these, because they particularly point to the consummation of the great scheme of the Deity for the redemption of mankind from the consequences of the fall, and for the cure of moral evil,—a scheme to be consummated in the establishment of that religion, or kingdom of the Messiah that will ultimately triumph over, and supersede all the kingdoms arising out of, and supported by, human policy; and also because the historic facts that shew the fulfilment of these predictions are more prominent and generally known than those which relate to the other predictions, although, prominent as they are, they yet may not generally be recognized as evidences of the truth of prophecy, because the minds of men are seldom called to a consideration of them in that light. Ezekiel also was a captive at Babylon, and delivered some prophetic intimations of the Messiah, and of the establishment of his hierarchial government, as did all the minor prophets. The last of the inspired men under the Mosaic dispensation, until the Messiah came, was Malachi. He opens his mission by reminding the Israelites of their being chosen by God as his people, for his own great purposes, as shewn by his providence in the birth and fortunes of the two sons of Isaac, the son of their great progenitor, Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed. He then takes occasion to reprove their abuse of the goodness of God towards them, and particularly, to denounce his judgments against the priesthood, for their wickedness in perverting their office, by converting the covenant of his church, established by Moses, into a means of gratifying their own cupidity, and to announce prophetically the Mediator of the new covenant, in whom his promises to Abraham would be fulfilled, and whose appearance would be previously intimated to the Jewish nation by the sending to them a messenger who should prepare the way for this Prince of Peace, and which messenger was called Elijah, because he would resemble that great prophet "in his appearance, work, and success." He is also previously called the Messenger of the Covenant,—that covenant to be entered into between God and man, and mediated by a purer, costlier, more spiritual and efficacious sacrifice than that yearly one offered by the high priest for the sins of the people; and also than that of the paschal lamb, instituted to commemorate the preservation of the children of Israel (through the sprinkling of blood on their door-posts, an appropriate sign appointed by God himself,) from that mortality which destroyed all

the first-born of the Egyptians; and in commemoration, too, of their deliverance, at the same time, from Egyptian bondage. This messenger, I have before stated, was to appear in the spirit and power of Elijah or Elias. Accordingly, John the Baptist ushered in the great personage at the time the learned in the Jewish Scriptures, and, indeed, the whole nation, were expecting him, and whom he openly and repeatedly declared to be "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," who would, by the sacrifice of himself on the cross, literally fulfil that propitiatory atonement which the justice of God demanded for sin, which his mercy had provided, and which his preceding dispensation had typified in its ordinances, its ritual, and character of his elected servants, whom he had chosen as vehicles for conveying the blessing to mankind. Having given this very brief and incomplete summary of the Mosaic dispensation,—given it only as an introduction to the consideration of the Christian final one, which it is intended to compare with Mr. Owen's system, as a cure for moral evil, I shall conclude this part of my subject with a few additional remarks on the evidence we have of the truth of prophecy. These predictions, commencing from the earliest period of Jewish history, and extending, in their meaning, to the end of time, of course relate to the past, the present, and the future. With respect to the past and the present, those predictions that have been fulfilled, and of those fulfilling, we have the evidence of the Jewish nation now existing among all nations. The Jews were the original depositories, and their descendants are yet the possessors of these sacred writings, that taught them to expect a Messiah, and they still cherish a faith in those Scriptures, as the grounds of all their hopes of restored national polity and prosperity, through the Messiah. The Messiah came at the time those Scriptures taught their ancestors to expect him, and they rejected him, as the divine prescience foresaw, and as prophecy foretold they would.

This rejection, and the consequent disastrous downfal of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish nation, were not only foretold by the prophets of old, but also by Jesus Christ himself to the Jews, their incarnate God and Redeemer. He prepared his disciples to expect it, some time before his crucifixion, and more generally declared its consequences to the Jewish nation, when, turning to those whom affection and duty had prompted to follow him to his execution, lamenting and sorrowing—turning to them, he said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the hills, cover us," &c. And in the memorable prophecy delivered by him to his disciples, in answer to their question, asked by them upon his announcing the destruction of the temple, "Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the

sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" he most minutely describes the destruction and distress that would give so much cause for the daughters of Jerusalem to weep. How far the predictions have been fulfilled, Josephus, the Jewish historian, who wrote under the auspices of the Roman emperor, and who was no Christian, and the truth of whose narrative is acknowledged by the unconverted Jews of the present day, sufficiently proves. Whilst the Jewish nation remain unconverted, and maintain their adverse opinions to Christianity, the evidence they indirectly afford of its truth must rest on grounds far, indeed entirely, removed from suspicion, inasmuch as it is favourable to a cause to which those who give the evidence are unfavourable. The Jews would not, willingly, acknowledge Jesus Christ a true prophet, nor that the sufferings they, as a people, have undergone, was a punishment for their rejection of him as Messiah. The testimony they, therefore, indirectly yield of this, being against their inclination, cannot justly be suspected of being a fraudulent collusion to establish its truth. That such testimony is indirectly yielded by them, must be allowed, from their acknowledging that a character appeared at the time when the writings of the New Testament say he appeared, and who claimed for himself to be "him of whom Moses and the prophets did write," viz., Messiah; and as this time was agreeing to that pointed out by the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, and was believed to be it by the Jewish nation then, as shewn by their professed expectation of Messiah, and further yielded now by their assent, as aforementioned, to the verity of Josephus, whose historic records prove Jesus Christ to have been a true prophet, though he believed him not. This, then, being the case, the Jews' rejection of him as Messiah, because the circumstances under which he came disappointed their preconceived hopes, notions, and desires, is no evidence against his Messiahship, but a strong evidence to prove that he *has* come, because their rejection is a further evidence of the truth of prophecy respecting him, for it foretels this rejection. Nor should their blindly refusing to be convinced of the evidence Messiah gave of himself, by his mighty miracles, his wonderful beneficence, disinterestedness, and by that perfection of moral wisdom that shone out in him, throw a doubt on the probability of their having rejected such testimony, and therefore a doubt of such a character having appeared. For there is nothing more monstrously irrational in their *incredulity* than in the *easy belief* of those people who suffered themselves to be duped by the monstrous and absurd pretensions of the false prophet Mahomet, Johanna Southcote, or the false philosopher, Mr. Owen; for amongst their dupes, many had been enlightened by Christianity. The solution of the difficulty is only to be found in the operations of those passions and prejudices that bespeak a fallen nature. To the testimony adduced, that such a character as Jesus Christ did appear in Judæa when the Scriptures say he did, with the pre-

tensions of Messiahship, may be added what the Roman historian also relates; and from the construction the Romans would most likely put on such pretensions, they would, doubtless, become alarming to Roman ambition, and apparently adverse to Roman interest. Jesus Christ was, therefore, as likely to procure opposition to, and persecution of, himself, from the Romans as from the Jews; and he accordingly received it, but more particularly in his religion and his followers, for centuries after his religion's promulgation. The evidence, then, of the Roman historian, as far as it is favourable to the truth of Christianity, rests on grounds as little liable to suspicion as the Jewish, it being the testimony of an enemy, unwittingly given, in favour of what he would rather have discredited by detraction. The state of the Jewish nation, from the commencement of their dispersion to the present time of it, must be considered as a continual fulfilling of prophecy, and of concomitant providence. Moses, and the following prophets of old, intimate it, and represent it as a state of suffering and reproach, during which they should be persecuted, and become a proverb and a bye-word to all nations; and, from the predictions, a final restoration and return to Jerusalem is inferred by most of the learned Christian commentators, and also expected by the Jews themselves; and our Saviour's prophecy seems to imply as much, in that latter part of it which says, they, the Jews, should be led captive into all nations, and that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled, when which accomplishment took place they might lift up their heads, for their redemption drew near. It is now eighteen centuries since Jerusalem was destroyed, and the temple so literally rased, that its very foundation stones were dug up. In all this time, it has truly been trodden under foot of those whom the Jews would consider Gentiles. It has been the residence and resort of the surrounding barbarous nations, and the scene of marauding, of ambitious, and of religious strife, in as varied a manner. The Jews, during many years of their exile, experienced persecution and degradation from almost every nation into which they fled for refuge. In these latter times, feeling has been more favourable towards them, and from the concurring aspects of the natural, religious, and political world, there is reason for supposing that their final restoration and reception into the Church of Christ is not very distant.

When we consider the peculiarities of the Jewish dispersion, are we presumptuous in inferring that providence has been concomitant with prophecy, for is there another parallel instance of a people being driven from their native country by an invading, conquering enemy, and remaining a dispersed, yet a distinct people, among all nations, whither they had fled, for nearly two thousand years; still pertinaciously adhering to the old national religious faith, and continuing to practice much of its ceremonial worship, abstaining from one (its most important

part), only because their expatriation obliges the non-observance of it. That part of course is known to be sacrifice; for in no place could they lawfully offer sacrifice but at Jerusalem, according to the Mosaic appointment. Daniel's prophecy, that was to receive its accomplishment within the period of seventy weeks, (that is to say of years), which informed the Jews, captive at Babylon, of their return to Jerusalem, and which particularly and chronologically intimates the coming and the cutting off of Messiah, does likewise point out the *ceasing of the daily sacrifice*, as well as the final destruction of the city with the sanctuary, and the desolation of Judea. In the fulfilment of this prediction are not the purposes of Providence manifested as well as the course of human action foretold? For from the dispersion of the Jewish nation, do not these consequences result; first, a punishment to them for their having filled up the measure of their iniquities in rejecting the real sacrifice (the Lamb of God) that only could be expiatory? and was it not a meet part of that punishment that they should be deprived of the false hopes by which they might sustain themselves, through continued belief in the efficacy of the sacrificial rite, which was but the symbol of the efficacious reality rejected by them? "This flattering unction" they might still have applied to their souls, had they remained where they could have availed themselves of its delusive comfort. And was not the abrogation of the rite also called for, since its intention had been answered to the extent required, it being superseded by that real atoning sacrifice of which it was but the type? The removal of the Jewish nation then brought this about. And furthermore, does not the dispersion of the Jews, as well as proving a punishment to them, also make them a miraculous memento to all nations of the truth of those Scriptures of which they were the original depositaries, and which were the records of those providences and prophecies, that they, as a peculiar people, selected by the Divine Being for the furtherance of his own gracious purposes, had given rise to? Their firm belief in and adhesion to those Scriptures is, no doubt, co-operative with Providence as cause for their being preserved separate and distinct from other nations among which they dwell, until now; for in the Old Testament there is religious injunction against comingling with Gentiles: and they feel a strong motive for obeying this injunction, in the hopes they cherish (from the construction they put on their prophecies) of again becoming a body politic at Jerusalem; but in the early period of their history the Jews were but too prone to mix with the gentile idolatrous nations surrounding them. Their stricter separation since then seems therefore to have something providential in it, and we have the greater reason to infer it, because, to the observant Christian, the hand of Providence appears to be engaged in preparations for their return to their original country. Who, then, knowing that the Old Testament, in the hand of the Jews, and acknowledged by

them as of divine authority,—who, knowing that this book is agreeing in all material points with the book or Old Testament that Christians also receive as of divine authority, does not feel the force of the argument it furnishes Christians with for believing the New Testament a true account of the completion of divine revelation.

In continuing the arguments I would adduce in favour of the truth of revelation, whilst I also endeavour to develop it as a system intended by its author to cure that moral and physical evil which Mr. Owen professes can only be cured by his system of philosophy, I shall be as brief in my Summary of the Christian final dispensation as I was in that of the Mosaic preparatory one. On the purity and wisdom of its morality it is unnecessary for me to dilate, because its superiority over what was before time known through, or taught by, any system of moral philosophy merely human, is acknowledged by common consent, and proved in the results of abiding by its inculcations. I need not, therefore, further remark upon it than I have done, in shewing its opposition to the frauds of priestcraft and political expediency and the delusion of enthusiasm. Of the prophetic part of the scheme, as affording evidence of its divine origin, I need not advance more argument upon it than I did in my Summary of the Old Testament, for in that I also took into consideration the prophecies of the New that relate to the Jewish dispersion, the fulfilment of which furnishes so much evidence of prescience and Providence, and therefore of Christianity's truth. Of the miracles recorded in the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, it may be truly observed that they were of such kind as was calculated to impress those who saw them, and those who were benefitted by them, with the belief of their being instances of the power of a good, a gracious, and Almighty Being, who thus displayed that power as proofs that the doctrines delivered by those who were his instruments in these miraculous works, were also the word of the same beneficent and Almighty Being.

As to the fulfilment of the prophecies contained in the epistles and the Apocalypse, I shall take no other notice of them than to recommend their consideration through the reading of the learned comments and historic researches of modern pious and gifted men, such as Faber, Croly, and others.

Having succinctly considered the principles on which Christianity is founded, and assuming them to be, self-evidently, characteristic of, and agreeable to, what must reasonably be expected in a revelation from God, intended to counteract the effects of moral evil, I shall conclude the stricture by as brief a consideration of the character of its founder, as evinced in his conduct; and of the character and conduct of those his immediate disciples and followers, who were his agents in the promulgation of his religion, or establishment of the kingdom he laid claim to as Messiah. According to the gospel history, Jesus Christ sprang from

the humblest parentage (though by miraculous birth), and in early youth gave proof of mental excellence in knowledge and moral wisdom, far beyond the common attributes of humanity at his age. His wisdom he employed, as he did his miraculous power, to the ends of beneficence. In the exercise of those wonderful powers that bespoke his divine authority, and through which he at first procured the reverence, engaged the affections, and obtained the belief in himself (as the promised Messiah) of multitudes of the Jewish nation, he never discovered the ambition that prompts to the attainment of worldly honours, although he might have arrived at those honours by only complying with the desire of the people to make him a king. His profession ever was, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and to those who would be his subjects he ever required the obedience that would forego worldly advantage, and the renunciation of each darling vice as test of allegiance and as a performance of duty to him. The Jews, as has before been stated, expected Messiah at the time of his appearance,—that time being pointed out by the prophets; and the circumstance of their being then under the yoke of the Roman government, which galled them into impatience, made them also earnestly desire him as a deliverer. Seeing his miraculous power, and hearing his wisdom, they at first concluded Jesus Christ must be "him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write." But when he *acted* upon his profession, "my kingdom is not of this world," and declined the worldly honour and power they would have invested him with; when he also urged upon the nation that reform of heart that could alone fit them to be subjects of the kingdom which he would establish, he disappointed their hopes, and set their hearts against him. To gratify the ill-feeling the great men of the Jews had conceived against him, they sought to betray him into a dilemma, which they thought must subject him either to the fury of popular resentment, or to the danger of deep offence to the Roman Government, from one or other of which causes they looked for his destruction. This attempt it will be understood was made in putting the question as to the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar. The wise, fearless, and disinterested manner by which he extricated himself from the difficulty, served but to increase the malice he had defeated; for it gave him occasion to inculcate the several duties to God and to worldly governors, in a way to which they were, from corruption of heart and national prejudice, very averse. In the latter part of the case he indirectly sanctions the tribute to Cæsar. Would an ambitious designing impostor have adopted such policy? Would he have forgone the afore mentioned favourably concurring circumstances that would have conduced to his becoming a king? Would he have sacrificed his interests to principle, and so stand in the way a bar to his own advancement? The real pretensions of Jesus Christ were ever maintained by an authority that proved them. To the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and great men of the nation, who had

procured commanding influence over the people, he was open and fearless in his rebukes for their hypocritical cupidity in perverting religion and politics to their own personal advantage, and thus misleading those whom they ought to guide. To the lowly in station and meek in mind he was ever beneficently condescending, going about doing good in relieving their bodily sufferings and instructing their ignorant minds, by imparting to them the knowledge of divine truth; and on all occasions shewing, that wherever there was a teachable mind and a humble spirit, the station of high or low was no distinction with him. He persisted in urging the necessity of moral regeneration as the qualification to be his follower, and as that which would render them worthy of the benefits of being a subject of the kingdom he came to establish. This was so grievously offensive to the pride, and so contrary to the pre-conceived notions and worldly interests of the priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and great men in general, and so contrary to the expectation which their teachings had begot in the people, and which teachings were also agreeable to the people's worldly wishes; that priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and people in general, became blinded; or rather their mental vision was deceived by viewing the character and conduct of Messiah through the medium of prejudice. They could only see the Messiah (the Messiah they would acknowledge) in the prophetic description of his second coming, as a king and a conqueror triumphant over his enemies, and reigning in glory and power. Their nation's experience of greatness and independence in a former state, taught them to expect a Messiah agreeable to this prophetic description; because such an one was, according to their feelings, desirable on account of their state at that time. They sighed for liberation from the Roman yoke, and a return to their former glory, through the aid of divine power exercised for them again, as it was under their great leaders, Moses, Joshua, David, and other eminent instruments of providence. Christ's lowly station and humbly bearing, and preaching deliverance from the bondage of sin, were, therefore, the subject of their scorn and derision. His miracles were considered the works of the devil; and his wisdom, as it savoured not of the policy of this world, was no other than foolishness, to their carnal and perverted minds. They, therefore, despised and rejected him; made him to be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and ultimately put him to an ignominous death, believing they had but punished an impostor. But his soul, through this suffering, having been made an offering for sin (even that of his murderers), he rose from the dead to reign really in the glory of the kingdom of heaven. To those who believed in him he never held out the hopes of worldly advantage, as it related to wealth, power, honour, or ease. Would they prove their faith by their obedience?—Would they be his disciples?—They must be prepared to forego these things, and to take up their cross and follow him,—their reward would be in heaven. From among his dis-

ciples and followers, Jesus Christ especially chose twelve to be the preachers and propagators of his gospel. They were told by him, that in the discharge of this their duty, they would be obstructed by the same persecuting malice which they had seen directed against himself; that dangers, distresses, and railings, and scourgings, awaited them; that the time was coming when, whosoever killed them, would think they had done God a service,—that, indeed, their missionary appointment, was like sending them as sheep among wolves. This they were to expect as his servants, who, having his interests in view, would, in the furthering of it, necessarily procure for themselves no better treatment than their master had experienced. For their encouragement to faithful adherence to his cause, he promised them the solace of his Peace; and for their guidance and support, the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who was also the Comforter. They saw the consummation of his sufferings in his crucifixion; and after his death they maintained their faith in, and their love for, him. Despite of the most vindictive and cruel opposition to their efforts, they persisted in executing his commands,—they preached the kingdom of heaven in all places where it was possible for them to have access, and received that recompence of their labours they were taught to look for in this world—the crown of martyrdom, which it is hardly to be supposed they would have contended for, had they not the firmest persuasion of also obtaining that promised them in the next—the crown of immortal glory. We read and hear of great self-devotion and generous sacrifices in false causes, when enthusiasm has influenced its dupes; but what are the grounds for supposing the apostles and evangelists to be under such influence. The gospels, acts, and the epistle, written by seven of them, shew them to be men of the soundest understanding,—men, capable of clear and deliberate judgment. Could they then be self-deceived as to what they experienced themselves, and in what they relate of others, from having the knowledge imparted to them by fellow-sufferers? Could they be self-deceived as to whether they heard the doctrines which they say the Saviour delivered; or deceived as to the reality of the miracles which they affirm they saw him perform? Could they judge rightly as to whether they saw him after his resurrection for several successive days, and conversed with him concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom they were engaged in establishing? Could they be deceived as to whether they themselves wrought miracles in support of the authority vested in them by their master? Would they not assure themselves of the grounds of their faith, before they yielded themselves up to death in attestation of the truth of it: and many of them did seal their testimony with their blood.

Having shewn, as I trust I have, that the Bible accounts for the origin of moral and physical evil, on more rational and satisfactory grounds than Mr. Owen's philosophy does; and also that the Bible proposes a cure for that evil, which a knowledge of the

cause of the evil justifies our belief in and reliance on as a proper and efficient remedy for it; I now proceed to examine the system which Mr. Owen proposes as an efficient cure for the evil, moral, and physical,—the cause of the unhappiness of mankind. This system he designates, "The Principles and Practice of the Rational Religion."

"1st. That all facts yet known to man indicate that there is an external or an internal cause of all existences, by the fact of their existence; that this all-prevailing cause of motion and change in the universe is that Incomprehensible Power which the nations of the world have called God, Jehovah, Lord, &c. &c.:—but that the facts are yet unknown to man which define what that Incomprehensible Power is."

This primary principle, as a foundation for religion, seems to me to be so ambiguously defined, that a rational inference of its implying any moral obligation to adopt it as such, can scarcely be drawn. It is a darker intimation of the great first uncaused cause, or author of nature, than heathen philosophy supplied as a foundation for religion. The altar at Athens, inscribed, "To the unknown God," indicated more of the religious sentiment natural to man intuitively, and which he also generally feels from rational deduction in contemplating the works of nature, than does the boasted philosophy of Mr. Owen, the enlightener,—for it insinuates no doubt as to the *existence* of a supreme intelligent being. Whether Mr. O. in his definition meant to convey a doubt or no as to the existence of such a being, I forbear decidedly to assert; but certainly, the defining of his opinion is quite calculated to beget doubts in minds pre-disposed to the liberty of conscience allowed by Socialism. (See this in the "Outline.")

The inconclusiveness and uncertainty that appears to be expressed in this first principle, would almost incline one to suppose that Mr. O. was one of those unstable philosophers spoken of by the apostle, as ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Having defined the Author of nature, he next defines the religious law of nature, agreeable to his notions of them, and which laws imply, in their principle, the same amount of responsibility in man as the first implied moral obligations in him in relation to his Creator. This second principle is thus expressed:

"2nd. That it is a law of nature obvious to our senses, that the internal and external character of all that have life upon the earth, is formed for them, and not by them, that, in accordance with this law, the internal and external character of man is formed FOR him, and not BY him; and that the knowledge of this fact, with its all-important consequences, will necessarily create in every one a new, sublime, and pure spirit of charity for the convictions, feelings, and conduct of the human race, and dispose them to be kind to all that has life—seeing that this varied life is formed by the same Incomprehensible Power that has created human nature, and given man his peculiar faculties"

The full meaning of this definition can only be understood by a reference to what Mr. O. lays down as "The five fundamental facts on which the rational system of society is founded," and "the constitution and laws of human nature, or moral science of man." When *it is understood*, the knowledge, according to Mr. O., "will necessarily create in every one a new, sublime, and pure spirit of charity for the convictions, feelings, and conduct of the human race." Referring, then, to the five fundamental facts, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, of them, and to the 5th, 6th, 11th, 13th, and 14th, of the constitution and laws of human nature, the definition seems to me, and as I think must to every one else, to infer, that because man is created with faculties and feelings that require to be acted upon by circumstances that will stimulate them so as to occasion effort and exertion in man, that therefore he is the mere creature of those circumstances that operate upon him as motives, his intellectual faculties through organization being so biased by education, that he is rational or irrational, as he has received impression through education. And that the knowledge of this being the case with all human beings, it will, consequently, beget the charity before spoken of as new, sublime and pure. That the charity which this doctrine inculcates may be, and is, *new*, I doubt not, but of its sublimity and purity, I presume to think there is much doubt; for it appears to me so completely calculated to pervert the sense of moral obligation, that its effects may very naturally resolve the principle, "do unto others as you would be done by," into this meaning, that as you feel it lawful to act from the impulses and inclinations of your nature, allow others the same indulgence without disapproval or reprehension. As a religious means of reforming moral and physical evil, it seems as well adapted for its purpose, and as likely to prove efficacious, as would be the attempts to reclaim a spoiled child by yielding to it an indulgence in whatever its waywardness required.

The third principle:—"That it is man's highest interest to acquire an accurate knowledge of those circumstances which produce EVIL to the human race, and of those which produce GOOD; and to exert all his powers to remove the former from society, and to create around it the latter only."

If it had no reference to, or connexion with, the two preceding principles might be considered correct and unobjectionable; but the loose morality they inculcate, makes it very doubtful whether evil is not put for good, and good for evil.

The 4th principle. "*That this invaluable practical knowledge can be acqnired solely through an extensive search after truth by an accurate, patient, and unprejudiced inquiry into facts as developed by nature.*" What is the nature of, and how extensive the search, Mr. Owen may have made after truth in investigating nature and her laws, that has led him to the discovery that man is the creature of circumstances, and an irresponsible being, I know not; but this I know, and dare aver, that whilst

he inculcates the doctrine, vain will be his attempt to promote and procure human happiness through moral reform; for this very plain reason, because he is doing away the most powerful motive that can act generally for inducing reformation, and substituting as a motive that, which if it prove one, can only be of inferior power, and act partially. But as Mr. O. professes his doctrines to be deduced from, and his principles of rational religion founded upon, the laws of nature, let us briefly again consider their rational claim to be so in this particular. We will and must admit a certain degree of knowledge to be necessary as a guide to happiness; but is there naturally a necessity for that knowledge which can only be obtained through extensive and laborious philosophic research? To say there is, is to say that the Creator, who willed the happiness of man, and who had displayed wisdom and power in his creation, had not displayed wisdom and power in arranging for the happiness he intended man should enjoy, by making that happiness dependent on circumstances of which man, in many instances of his character, could not avail himself, and in many more instance of his character naturally would not avail himself. For, in the first place, all men are not mentally capable of philosophic investigation; and, in the next place, among those who have the mental power, very few will be found who have the inclination, when the inquiry is to be promoted by a disposition to relinquish the indulgence of a favourite propensity, that they may philosophically ascertain its ultimate consequences; for the consequences to them will be comparatively unimportant if they involve not penal responsibility. It needs no further argument to shew that mankind in general would indulge in what yields them pleasure on the easiest terms, and call that happiness rather than seek for it through the medium of toilsome and patient philosophical exploration. Now since it does not appear a rational inference that because knowledge is necessary as a guide to happiness, that knowledge should be difficult or doubtful of attainment. Yet it appears a rational inference that the necessary knowledge should in part be intuitive, or how was man to be conscious that knowledge was necessary? What inducement could there be for man to seek further happiness through knowledge? And has not nature shewn this to be the case (that it is in part intuitive) in the provisions she has made in placing the monitor conscience to co-operate with reason as a guide and a guard? Do not most men acknowledge the existence and authority of this human attribute? And is not their belief in it confirmed by their experience? For what conscience suggests as morally right, they find to be so; and what it points out as morally wrong they also prove to be the case,—prove it by the ultimate happy or unhappy consequences to themselves in obeying or disobeying its dictates. Were it not for the monitions of this internal mentor, it is more than probable that man would be entirely given up to those gra-

tifications that would, in the end, shew that he was not pursuing his real happiness. In contending for this regulating and informing knowledge, derived to man through the intimations of conscience co-operating with reason, of course I mean not to assert their perfect sufficiency to answer the purpose to the extent desired. This the prevalence and effects of moral evil prove they are not fully competent to; no, nor with the teachings and remonstrances of the soundest moral philosophy superinduced; nor is it likely they should when the authority of religion, the appeal and the command of the Creator to his creatures, fails in accomplishing the desirable end to such full extent. Mr. O. may say, as he is no believer in revelation, that its failure is no argument with him, because with him it has therefore no authority. But Mr. O. will recollect that thousands who do acknowledge its authority, give proof of the power and obstinacy of moral and physical evil through their very faulty obedience to religious injunctions and admonitions.

I come to the conclusion, then, that if intuitive knowledge, which admonishes whilst it informs, that if sound moral philosophy (for ages having been known to man) which proves the wisdom of virtue and the folly of vice; and if religion, superior to both these in the power of the motive it imparts to the mind, from its confirming moral obligations by establishing the accountability of man; if these fail to cure the moral and physical evil that causes unhappiness and suffering to the human race, no expectation can there be of success from the power of the "practical knowledge," which, Mr. O. says, is to be acquired "solely through an extensive search after truth by an accurate, patient and unprejudiced inquiry into facts as developed by nature," when that inquiry in its results releases man from moral obligations, by shewing him to be the creature of circumstances. What inducement does such knowledge offer to relinquish vicious pleasures when there is a propensity to them, and to pursue virtuous ones when there is no propensity to them, and when enjoyment too is to cease with life; Socialism giving no hope beyond the grave? "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," is the philosophy that disbelief in an hereafter would assuredly teach the bulk of mankind, constituted as they are.

The 5th principle of Mr. O.'s rational religion is thus stated: "That man can never attain to a state of superior and permanent happiness, until he shall be surrounded by those external circumstances which will train him, from birth, to feel pure charity and sincere affection towards the whole of his species,—to speak the truth only, on all occasions, and to regard with a merciful and kind disposition all that has life." In this world man is not, nor ever will, until the reign of millenium blessing, be so circumstanced as that he might be influenced in a way that could or will enable him to attain the happiness which Mr. Owen calls superior and permanent. If man's existence here were permanent, or

that there were no life after this, there is every reason to believe that his Creator would have so constituted "man in relation to external objects" that the "practical knowledge," considered by Mr. O. so essential, yet that is so difficult and doubtful of acquirement to a great portion of the human species, would not be necessary to man's happiness; but that if man's happiness depended on knowledge to be acquired, that knowledge would be of easy attainment, so that it might, as no doubt it would, be common to all. As man is constituted (proved to be by all hitherto experience), mere knowledge will never prove effective for coercing vicious inclinations, and promoting virtuous ones, so that "charity, affection, mercy, and love of truth" shall generally pervade society, and cause the happiness that is constant, permanent, and superior. Mr. Owen's failure in providing a cure for the evil that is the source of unhappiness, will be found to arise from his ignorance of the cause of it; and his scheme for the purpose is furthermore rendered less efficient by the proposition contained in his 6th principle of rational religion.

"That such superior knowledge and feelings can never be given to man under those institutions of society which have been founded on the mistaken supposition that man forms his *feelings* and *convictions* by his *will*, and, therefore, has merit or demerit, or deserves praise or blame, or reward or punishment for them."

As the doctrines contained in this 6th principle are in strict accordance with the notion of man being the creature of circumstance and irresponsible, they are of course opposed to those of his free agency and accountability. Reward and punishment must therefore be repudiated by Mr. Owen's system for consistency's sake. It will not be necessary to recur to again and again, and to reconsider the responsibility or irresponsibility of man; I shall only briefly remark that the principle of reward and punishment derives a powerful argument in favour of its agreeing with nature's laws in the constitution of man, from the consideration of its being recognized and acted upon by all nations, from the earliest period to the present time, and now obtains the consent and approbation of the world in general, as appropriate to merit or demerit. From this, I suppose the adoption of reward and punishment, as a means of promoting good and averting evil to society, to have originated in those feelings and convictions which Mr. O. says man does not form for himself, but which are formed for him by the impression which circumstances produce upon his organization. And what were the circumstances that impressed upon the mind of man originally, the expediency of reward and punishment as a means of procuring and securing human happiness, naturally dependent on social order? What but the experience of mankind in feeling the effects of moral right or wrong, and those effects shewing the agreement of the intuitive knowledge mankind had of right and wrong, and of the consciousness they also had of its merit

and demerit, and therefore of its deserving reward or punishment. Hence the adoption of reward and punishment would not only appear consonant to justice, but agreeable to sound policy. It would perhaps assist a reflecting person in forming a judgment as to whether a system of reform, founded on the responsibility, or one founded on the irresponsibility of man, is the best calculated to operate upon man, constituted as either system may suppose him; I say best calculated to operate as an encouragement to moral right, or as a means of deterring from moral wrong, if that person were to let his reflections carry him into Newgate, and other such receptacles for vicious delinquents.

Let but such person contemplate the characters, the "Reward and Punishment" system has sent there; let him contemplate them not only in the atrocities they have shewn themselves capable of, but in the confessions they have, many of them, made as to what led them to the commissions of those atrocities; and then let the person form an opinion as to whether the merely instilling of all the knowledge Mr. Owen displays of "what man is;" "what society is;" "what constitutes happiness;" and "how it is to be insured;" with the advantage of the "rational religion" of Mr. Owen's system superadded, would have rendered such characters really happy themselves, or promoters of happiness in others, through moral motives. Among those who have got the reward of their conduct in these places, it is more than probable that many could be found who are believers of, and have been practisers upon, the principles of "the rational religion system;" and who, doubtless, feel that a great violation of its "pure and sublime charity" has been committed in their commitment: since they find themselves punished for only obeying those impulses which external circumstances acting upon their organization taught them to obey. But not only in Newgate and such places are characters to be found, who might be adduced as examples of the probable good effects of the liberalism of Socialism; but out of Newgate are many, who, if they were in it, might be judiciously located, and who are the fac-similies of a description of characters now dead, that proved themselves true disciples of this philosophy of nature by their enlightened liberality. That I may not be personal and pointed, I profess to speak generally of those who resemble the patriotic and philanthropic philosophers, Voltaire, Rosseau, Tom. Pain, and others, whose virtuous views and efforts did so much to produce that happy state of society experienced in France during the revolution. The beatitude of society, when men are at liberty to do what is right in their own eyes, was beautifully and beneficially illustrated in the events of that halcyon time. The fallacy of what is assumed in the 7th principle of the "Rational Religion,"—"That under institutions formed in accordance with the Rational System of Society, this superior knowledge and these superior dispositions may be given to the whole of the human race without chance of failure, except in case of organic

disease,—may be inferred by what has already been said on the power and effects of knowledge in training to, or training of, such feelings as will beget the mutual conduct necessary between man and man to conduce to general happiness, and may further be concluded on, from the reasons to be advanced against what is assumed in the 8th and 9th principles of the "Rational Religion."

"That in consequence of this superior knowledge, and these superior dispositions, the contemplation of nature will create in every mind, feelings of high adoration, too sublime and pure to be expressed in forms or words, for that Incomprehensible Power which acts in and through all Nature, everlastingly composing, decomposing, and recomposing, the material of the universe, producing the endless variety of life, of mind, and of organized form.

"That the practice of the Rational Religion will, therefore, consist in promoting, to the utmost of our power, the well-being and happiness of every man, woman, and child, without regard to their class, sect, party, country, or colour; and its worship, in those inexpressible feelings of wonder, admiration, and delight, which, when man is surrounded by superior circumstances only, will naturally arise from the contemplation of the Infinity of space, of the Eternity of duration, of the Order of the Universe, and of that Incomprehensible Power, by which the atom is moved, and the aggregate of Nature is governed."

The philosophical contemplation of the works and wonders of nature is certainly calculated to raise the mind to high, pure, and sublime feelings, through the impression it communicates to the mind, of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Author of nature, and may dispose the minds of some to attempt an imitation of those attributes in forming their own character, as far as their limited powers will enable them: and now and then a Socrates and a Plato may adorn and instruct human nature. But that all mankind, who have their reasoning faculties in a sane state, or that are, as Mr. O. expresses it, free from "organic disease," may be brought under the influence of this "superior knowledge," and "superior disposition," so that through this amiable wisdom, happiness shall be generally diffused, cannot be proved; nor is it reasonable to suppose it probable,—past and present experience shews the improbability of mental enlightenment operating thus generally and infallibly: for if it were probable, how has it happened, that in the lapse of time since the existence of Socrates, Plato, and some others, during which such an innumerable multitude, whose organization has been acted upon by external circumstances that were the same circumstances that acted upon them, the afore-mentioned philosophers, viz. the works and wonders of nature, how comes it, I say, that so few of those, comparatively speaking, acquired the knowledge that has the power to beget this superlative piety and philanthrophy. The acquirement of philosophic knowledge (though all, I maintain, have not

the mental power to acquire) has yet been abundant enough to shew its lamentable inefficiency to produce the social desideratum, or even individual happiness. There are those at present in existence, who, it is not to be doubted, possess all the knowledge Mr. Owen can impart, who yet, in their experience, have no more benefit from their knowledge than the ignorant, but perhaps have much less as regards real happiness: for those who are unacquainted with the philosophy of Socialism, have the best chance to avoid the mischiefs that will and must accrue to the wayward, who consider themselves irresponsible; and those who are wayward will remain so, whilst they believe the doctrine that tells them they are unaccountable.

But worse than the failing of philosophical knowledge to promote good, socially and individually, though lacking the power to counteract moral evil, is the proof we have had of its opposite effects. For amongst the number of those dead and alive, whose knowledge of the phenomena of nature, and of her laws, moral and physical, constitute them philosophers, are to be found some whose philosophy has led them to the wise conclusion, that there is no God. What an admirable foundation is here laid for the superior knowledge that is to beget the superior disposition, that shall produce so much moral good, and consequent social happiness! The feelings of these philosophers must, indeed, be "too sublime and pure to be expressed," whilst they are contemplating nature (in its order, in its beauty, and in its bounty,) as independent of a gracious Providence, and man as, therefore, independent of all moral obligation. From the consciousness of being left to the genuine influences of natural impulse, we may be sure (as the result of this liberty) man will be nothing but justice, beneficence, and charity! How this has been exemplified may be understood by reference to that great school of philosophy, the French academic,—several of its members professed Atheism, and practically shewed how virtuously the social sympathies will reciprocate, when the mind is relieved of the irksome and onerous sense of accountability to a supreme being. The French revolution, which these worthies greatly assisted to promote, gave full scope for the operation of the philosophic principle; and it evinced itself in all the amiable developments that were likely to be unfolded by a reckless disregard of every feeling that is humane, and every sentiment that is honest. From the examination I have made of Mr. Owen's "Principles and Practice of the Rational Religion," I can come to no other conclusion, than that, as the system is founded on the supposition that man is the mere creature of circumstances and irresponsible for his actions, it is, therefore, more calculated to increase and aggravate the evil, moral and physical, than to cure or ameliorate it. For though Mr. O. may be right in defining man a compound of "animal propensities, intellectual faculties, and moral qualities," and that these, his attributes, are in connexion with a peculiarity of organization, that becomes the means of his

powers being developed through the action of external circumstances on that organization, a reciprocating action between the organization and external circumstances continually producing effects from birth to death. Though thus far Mr. O. may be right, yet I say it is a wrong inference to draw from these premises, that man is, therefore, the mere creature of these circumstances, and that each one's character, from a natural necessity, is formed by the continually acting and re-acting of his original organization, and such external influences, as he may be liable to. For if he be thus the creature of circumstance, then the power of his intellectual faculties and moral qualities must be so subordinate, as to allow his animal propensities ever to act as preventives to the attainment of those ends it must be supposed the intellectual faculties and moral qualities were intended to promote. It must be confessed, the predominance of the animal propensities is too generally allowed by mankind for their happiness; but this is not to be ascribed to the necessity which man's being the mere creature of circumstances implies; for no one can deny but that the effects of unrestrained indulgence is often and commonly the cause of compunction: and what does this mean but the intellectual faculties and moral feelings asserting their superior authority, and reminding man that their appointment proves his responsibility. Man's disinclination to obey their authority, and frequent lapses from moral right, is an evil that not ignorance alone has caused, and an evil which not knowledge alone can cure. This is proved by the learned as well as the unlearned; the simple and the philosophical being alike the occasional instances of the power of an innate and general peccancy. The very constitution of man, according to Mr. O.'s definition, as a compound of "intellectual faculties and moral qualities as well as animal propensities," rationally implies, that external circumstances acting on his organization are intended to prove motives for choice as well as stimulus to action. The evils and irregularities arising out of the arrangement, shews man to be in a probationary state, and must be imputed to man, and not to his Maker,—the cause of the evil originating, as the Bible says it originates, and the cure for it that which the Bible prescribes. But Mr. O. rejects the Bible, not only because be considers it incompetent to the purposes of moral reformation, and a means of promoting social happiness, but because he also considers that part of it, the consummation of revelation, Christianity, as an assisting cause of the evils complained of. He accuses Christianity of this, by including it amongst those institutions of society which, he says, have been "devised in opposition to nature." By what arguments he supports this charge I know not. That Christianity is not generally and effectually a cure, is, indeed, too true; but that it is one cause of the evil is so palpably false, that to think it necessary to prove it so, is to insult common sense. Can it be believed or supposed, that a religion which inculcates as its most import-

ant injunction, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself," (these injunctions being understood in the scriptural sense of them,) is it to be supposed that such a religion can be the cause of moral evil and unhappiness to society. None but the subtle advocate of the licentiousness which the doctrines of man's irresponsibility must induce, could ever have advanced such an opinion; and none but the besotted and depraved dupes of his system could ever be so influenced in their feelings and judgments, as to entertain a notion that such an opinion was founded on truth. After the examination that Christianity has been subjected to, it cannot be necessary to say more of it now than that it contains, in its component essentials, every ingredient that belongs to a moral specific. But if the medicine is refused to be taken, is that an argument against its salutary efficiency? The rejection of Christianity is not, however, the only, nor, perhaps, the principal, cause of its failing to operate more generally and effectually; the power of the medicine is too often neutralized or destroyed by the means used to render it palatable; that is to say, there are so many professing Christians who pervert and defeat its religious end and purpose by the glosses they put upon its vital principles and tenets. Through these means they accommodate those principles and tenets to their own corrupt inclinations, instead of submitting the peccancy of inclination to Christianity's correcting precepts; and thus they render it non-effective. But though among the many thousands who not only profess, but who really believe Christianity, such numbers are to be found, that are yet lamentable instances of the power and prevalence of moral evil, would a rational and candid inquirer after truth, who had made himself acquainted with the principles of Christianity, come to the conclusion, that it, Christianity, could at all conduce to the end it proposes to correct. If he impartially scanned the religion, and if he also impartially scanned human nature, through what history records, by what experience has taught him in his observations on the conduct and characters of others, and especially by what he may discover in his own heart, if there he is observant, and his inquiry unbiassed by self-love, what would his inference then be? Would he impute the prevalent power of moral evil to an ignorance in man that rendered him the dupe of a vicious religion? Would he not rather come to the conclusion that man, through frailty, was incapable of constantly being what reason and conscience teaches him he ought to be? but he would not think or believe that his Creator willed it so, or that he had not power to prevent its being the case if he thought good. He would perceive that the Bible cleared up the difficulty, by representing man as fallen from a better state,—as yet being in a probationary one; and that Christianity was the merciful means the Creator had devised for restoring his creatures, and making them feel their dependence on his power, goodness, and mercy.

In my attempt to ascertain the comparative power of Christianity and Socialism to effect respectively their purpose (viz. the cure of moral and physical evil, and thereby conduce to human happiness), I have put into juxta position the foundations on which the principles of each system is built, and thus, side by side, examined each system's ascription of moral and physical evil; then the adaptation of the means to the ends each system has in view; and lastly the power of the motive each system supplies in its principles to human beings for availing themselves of the proffered remedy. On this latter part of my plan I would enlarge a little further before I close the consideration of the subject. I shall assume as granted, that if mankind would act upon the principles of that moral law which Christianity inculcates, human beings might and would be socially happy in this world. I assume this as granted, because all attempts to controvert the truth of the assumption serve but to confirm it, as does all experience, when and where it is acted upon by a community; and because Mr. Owen disproves it not, although he has the hardihood to charge Christianity of being aiding and assisting with other causes, in inducing human suffering, or at least in preventing the cure of the cause of that suffering. I also assume as granted what I have before asserted, that many, very many who profess Christianity, and who, there is every reasonable proof, believe it to have divine authority, yet do not submit themselves beneficially to its influence, rather yielding themselves to the seductive power of moral evil, when they are assailed by sensual or selfish temptations. If, then, a system, which by many is acknowledged to have divine authority for what it requires of us; that encourages virtue or obedience to its precepts by the promise of eternal happiness as reward, and discourages vice by denouncing eternal misery as punishment for wilful and persevering disobedience, and which also adds the minor inducement to comply with its requirements that Socialism holds out, viz. sublunary happiness: if, in a multitude of instances, such a system as this fails to correct moral and physical evil,—fails to induce mankind to renounce those practices that ultimately occasions them unhappiness, and to adopt those that would assuredly tend to their good; if in too many instances Christianity produce not the desired effect, in how many hundreds of thousand instances more must Socialism prove unsuccessful, even though it should philosophically inculcate the moral virtues? An inferior motive can scarcely be expected to succeed when a superior one fails; and that Socialism proposes an infinitely inferior one, must be plain to common sense, and acknowledged by every candid mind; for what is the motive that gives Socialism the power of reforming the heart by its addresses to the understanding? An assurance from Mr. Owen that man is not accountable for his character or conduct, he being the creature of circumstance. He need, therefore, not fear punishment, for he does not deserve

it, nor hope for reward beyond what philosophy can procure him in the shape of enjoyment here, for there is no hereafter. I now leave all to judge for themselves as to which of the two systems is most likely to be founded in truth and reason, and which it will be most wise in them to confide in and obey.

Perhaps Mr. Owen may conceive I am open to retort in my argument against his system on account of its very late introduction into the world, and accuse Christianity of being liable to the same objection. That it is not so liable to objection is acknowledged by those who have considered the vital principle and first main object of Christianity, viz., the remission of sin through the atonement made for it by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In this its most momentous charactaristic it is retrospective as well as prospective in its beneficent operations, going back to the first man, Adam, and extending to the last of his sons. To shew that it is so, I shall partially and briefly recapitulate what has before been advanced as the real cuase of moral and physical evil, and the cure thereof. The available and universal virtuality of the atonement was indeed prophetically and typically developed at the earliest period of time, when man, in his first probationary state, fell and became depraved through the transgression of disobedience, God then intimated the remedy for the evil; and though the knowledge of this became lost to the world, and, in consequence of the fall, moral and physical evil prevailed for ages in it, yet the development of Christianity, in its full and final character, being deferred to the latter ages, implies no imputation on the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, but affords evidence of those attributes being employed on man's behalf through or by that very delay. Christianity is founded on those principles of divine justice and mercy that restores human nature, fallen through disobedience, from an originally happier, holier, and immortal, though probationary state, to a state of second probation, that gives him reason to hope for, and assistance to regain, what original transgression lost. That the development of the divine plan, in reference to the accomplishment of this great end, need not necessarily have been ealier, I cite the authority of an inspired minister of religion to shew. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, evidently intimates, that to make the atonement for original sin available, there are conditions to be observed, and which conditions are moral obligations, felt by all mankind from the beginning, in a certain degree, through the power of reason and conscience. Those, therefore, who fulfilled these conditions by obedience to the moral law, according to the light by nature or revelation vouchsafed to them, were those whom the dispensations of Christianity would redeem; not that sinless obedience is expected: failure through frailty is forgiven and atoned for, if forgiveness is sought through

repentance. In further illustration of this, he shews the enlightened Jew that under the Mosaic dispensation circumcision, the seal of the covenant between him and God, availed nothing, if he kept not the commandments which were the conditions of that covenant. In like manner Christian profession, without Christian practice, was nothing; a wilful and habitual breach of the moral law would make the cross of Christ of none effect to those who so abused their Christian profession. But Mr. O. will ask, Is it not claimed for Christianity that wherever it has been received it has been the cause of increased happiness in this world, through the moral improvement it has introduced. Why then was the desirable benefit so long deferred? Doubtless when its pure and peaceful principles have been maintained, as well as acknowledged, it has never failed to produce these happy effects. But I must call Mr. O.'s attention to one of the consequences of the fall of man, viz. that moral taint, which if it did not exist in human nature, both religion and philosophy were unnecessary. This moral taint has ever shewn itself so inveterate and malignant in its corrupting influence as to pervert good into evil. For scarcely had Christianity been promulgated but its corruption commenced, and after its commencement progressed, until, in some instances, corruption had converted Christianity into a system of cupidity, error, and delusion, that made it worse than no religion at all. This spirit of evil began to work in the very times of the apostle, as we have their writings to testify; and we are told by them, through inspiration, would work until it became consummated in that man of sin in whose person the whole mystery of iniquity would be embodied and revealed, and afterwards destroyed by the ultimate triumph of Christianity. That it continued to work, we have proof of in the papal perversions, and in those various ones of fanaticism or fraud of which history informs us, and which our own latter times instance also. Now as the divine prescience foresaw this impious perversion of his merciful dispensation, a perversion that must extend and aggravate human guilt so long as it existed, is there profane presumption in supposing that in order to prevent this accumulation and increase of human wickedness, that the divine goodness deferred the manifestation of his gracious purpose until when the least time could occur between that manifestation and the completion of the period appointed for the world's duration? To account for the elapsing of one considerable portion of time before this manifestation of God's scheme for human redemption took place, let it be remembered that it pleased God the world should be properly prepared for its reception, no doubt that evidence might thereby be afforded of its truth, such evidence as Providence and prophecy supply through the medium of that nation which the Deity especially selected for the display of his power and his gooodess in furtherance of his purpose,—the Jewish nation. From the call of Abraham, their great pro-

genitor, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed, to the time when the sceptre had departed from Judah, aud Shiloh had come, the Jewish history records a succession of providences and prophecies that point to the great event, and become more and more explanatory of it as its fulfilment approached. Thus it pleased God to afford evidence of himself in his word as well as in his works.

END.

Printed by J. S. Hodson. 15, Cross Street, Hatton Garden, London.